

Please AMEND the claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of implementing storage virtualization in a storage area network, the method comprising:

creating a virtual enclosure, the virtual enclosure having one or more virtual ~~enclosure~~ ports and being adapted for representing one or more virtual storage units, each of the virtual storage units representing one or more physical storage locations on one or more physical storage units of the storage area network;

associating each of the virtual ~~enclosure~~ ports of the virtual enclosure with a port of a network device within the storage area network, thereby enabling one or more network devices within the storage area network to be associated with the virtual ~~enclosure~~ ports; and

assigning an address or identifier to each of the virtual ~~enclosure~~ ports;

wherein associating each of the virtual ~~enclosure~~ ports of the virtual enclosure with a port of a network device within the storage area network includes sending a message from a first network device to a physical port of a second network device within the storage area network to instruct the physical port of the second network device to handle messages addressed to the address or identifier assigned to the associated virtual ~~enclosure~~ port, thereby enabling the first network device to instruct the physical port of the second network device to act on behalf of the virtual port.

2. (Cancelled)

3. (Currently Amended) The method network device as recited in claim 18 4, wherein

the storage area network is a virtual storage area network.

4. (Currently Amended) The ~~method~~ network device as recited in claim 18 4, further comprising:

~~associating wherein~~ a Node World Wide Name is associated with the virtual enclosure.

5. (Currently Amended) The ~~method~~ network device as recited in claim 18 4, further comprising:

~~assigning wherein~~ a Port World Wide Name is assigned to each of the virtual enclosure ports such that the Port World Wide Name is associated with an associated physical port of a network device within the storage area network.

6. (Currently Amended) The ~~method~~ network device as recited in claim 18 4, wherein the physical port of the second network device within the storage area network is a port of a fibre channel device.

7. (Currently Amended) The ~~method~~ network device as recited in claim 18 4, wherein

~~assigning an address or identifier to each of the virtual enclosure ports comprises:~~

~~assigning a~~ an FCID is assigned to each of the virtual enclosure ports.

8. (Currently Amended) The method as recited in claim 1, further comprising:

selecting a number of virtual ~~enclosure~~ ports to be included in the virtual enclosure.

9. (Currently Amended) The ~~method~~ network device as recited in claim 18 8, wherein

the number of virtual ~~enclosure~~ ports of the virtual enclosure is greater than a number of ports of each network device within the storage area network.

10. (Currently Amended) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein associating each of the virtual ~~enclosure~~ ports of the virtual enclosure with a port of a second network device within the storage area network comprises:

associating the virtual ~~enclosure~~ ports with ports of one or more network devices within the storage area network.

11. (Currently Amended) The ~~method~~ network device as recited in claim 18 4, wherein associating each of the virtual ~~enclosure~~ ports of the virtual enclosure with a port of a network device within the storage area network comprises:

sending a bind message to a port of a network device within the storage area network, thereby binding the port of a network device within the storage area network to one or more of the virtual ~~enclosure~~ ports.

12. (Currently Amended) The ~~method~~ network device as recited in claim 11, further comprising:

sending a trap message to one or more additional ports of one or more network devices within the storage area network, thereby instructing the one or more additional ports of one or more network devices within the storage area network to trap messages directed to one of the virtual ~~enclosure~~ ports.

13. (Currently Amended) The ~~method~~ network device as recited in claim 18 4, wherein one or more of the virtual storage units each comprises a VLUN or other virtual

representation of storage on the storage area network.

14. (Original) The method as recited in claim 1, further comprising:
assigning one or more virtual storage units to the virtual enclosure.

15. (Original) The method as recited in claim 14, wherein the one or more virtual storage units each comprise a VLUN or other virtual representation of storage on the storage area network.

16. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable medium storing thereon computer-readable instructions for implementing storage virtualization in a storage area network, comprising:

instructions for creating a virtual enclosure, the virtual enclosure having one or more virtual ~~enclosure~~ ports and adapted for representing one or more virtual storage units, each of the virtual storage units representing one or more physical storage locations on one or more physical storage units of the storage area network;

instructions for associating each of the virtual ~~enclosure~~ ports of the virtual enclosure with a port of a network device within the storage area network, thereby enabling one or more network devices within the storage area network to be associated with the virtual ~~enclosure~~ ports; and

instructions for assigning an address or identifier to each of the virtual ~~enclosure~~ ports;

wherein the instructions for associating each of the virtual ~~enclosure~~ ports of the virtual enclosure with a port of a network device within the storage area network includes instructions for sending a message from a first network device to a physical port of a second

network device within the storage area network to instruct the physical port of the second network device to handle messages addressed to the address or identifier assigned to the associated virtual enclosure port, thereby enabling the first network device to instruct the physical port of the second network device to act on behalf of the virtual port.

17. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for implementing storage virtualization in a storage area network, comprising:

means for creating a virtual enclosure, the virtual enclosure having one or more virtual enclosure ports and adapted for representing one or more virtual storage units, each of the virtual storage units representing one or more physical storage locations on one or more physical storage units of the storage area network;

means for associating each of the virtual enclosure ports of the virtual enclosure with a port of a network device within the storage area network, thereby enabling one or more network devices within the storage area network to be associated with the virtual enclosure ports; and

means for assigning an address or identifier to each of the virtual enclosure ports; wherein the means for associating each of the virtual enclosure ports of the virtual enclosure with a port of a network device within the storage area network includes means for sending a message from a first network device to a physical port of a second network device within the storage area network to instruct the physical port of the second network device to handle messages addressed to the address or identifier assigned to the associated virtual enclosure port, thereby enabling the first network device to instruct the physical port of the second network device to act on behalf of the virtual port.

18. (Currently Amended) A network device adapted for implementing storage virtualization in a storage area network, comprising:

 a processor; and

 a memory, at least one of the processor and the memory being adapted for:

 creating a virtual enclosure, the virtual enclosure having one or more virtual ~~enclosure~~ ports and adapted for representing one or more virtual storage units, each of the virtual storage units representing one or more physical storage locations on one or more physical storage units of the storage area network;

 associating each of the virtual ~~enclosure~~ ports of the virtual enclosure with a port of a network device within the storage area network, thereby enabling one or more network devices within the storage area network to be associated with the virtual ~~enclosure~~ ports; and

 assigning an address or identifier to each of the virtual ~~enclosure~~ ports;

 wherein associating each of the virtual ~~enclosure~~ ports of the virtual enclosure with a port of a network device within the storage area network includes sending a message from a first network device to a physical port of a second network device within the storage area network to instruct the physical port of the second network device to handle messages addressed to the address or identifier assigned to the associated virtual ~~enclosure~~ port, thereby enabling the first network device to instruct the physical port of the second network device to act on behalf of the virtual port.

19. (Currently Amended) A method of performing LUN mapping in a storage area network, the method comprising:

 accessing a LUN mapping table having one or more entries, each of the entries identifying an initiator in the storage area network, one or more of a set of one or more virtual ~~enclosure~~ ports of a virtual enclosure, and associating a specified logical unit with one or

more virtual storage units, each of the virtual storage units representing one or more physical storage locations on one or more physical storage units of the storage area network, wherein the virtual enclosure is adapted for representing the set of one or more virtual storage units and each of the virtual ~~enclosure~~ ports is associated with a physical port of a network device within the storage area network, wherein the physical port of the network device has received a message from another network device instructing the physical port to handle messages addressed to the associated virtual ~~enclosure~~ port; and

when a request for the specified logical unit is received from the initiator via one of the associated virtual ~~enclosure~~ ports, identifying one of the entries in the LUN mapping table and employing the one or more virtual storage units specified in the entry to service the request.

20. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable medium storing thereon instructions for performing LUN mapping in a storage area network, comprising:

instructions for accessing a LUN mapping table having one or more entries, each of the entries identifying an initiator in the storage area network, one or more of a set of one or more virtual ~~enclosure~~ ports of a virtual enclosure, and associating a specified logical unit with one or more virtual storage units, each of the virtual storage units representing one or more physical storage locations on one or more physical storage units of the storage area network, wherein the virtual enclosure is adapted for representing the set of one or more virtual storage units and each of the virtual ~~enclosure~~ ports is associated with a physical port of a network device within the storage area network, wherein the physical port of the network device has received a message from another network device instructing the physical port to handle messages addressed to the associated virtual ~~enclosure~~ port; and

instructions for identifying one of the entries in the LUN mapping table and

employing the one or more virtual storage units specified in the entry to service the request when a request for the specified logical unit is received from the initiator via one of the associated virtual ~~enclosure~~ ports.

21. (Currently Amended) In a first network device, a method of implementing storage virtualization in a storage area network, the method comprising:

 sending a virtualization message to a physical port of a second network device within the storage area network, the virtualization message instructing the physical port to handle messages addressed to a virtual ~~enclosure~~ port of a virtual enclosure, the virtual enclosure having one or more virtual ~~enclosure~~ ports and being adapted for representing one or more virtual storage units, each of the virtual storage units representing one or more physical storage locations on one or more physical storage units of the storage area network; and
 receiving a virtualization response from the physical port of the second network device in response to the virtualization message.

22. (Currently Amended) The ~~method~~ apparatus as recited in claim 34 24, wherein the virtual ~~enclosure~~ port is identified by a NWWN and a PWWN.

23. (Currently Amended) The ~~method~~ apparatus as recited in claim 34 24, wherein the virtualization response indicates that the physical port is configured to handle messages addressed to the virtual ~~enclosure~~ port of the virtual enclosure.

24. (Currently Amended) The ~~method~~ apparatus as recited in claim 34 24, wherein the virtualization message indicates that the physical port is to obtain an address or identifier assigned to the virtual ~~enclosure~~ port.

25. (Currently Amended) The ~~method~~ apparatus as recited in claim 24, wherein the virtualization message is a bind message or a trap message.

26. (Currently Amended) The ~~method~~ apparatus as recited in claim 24, wherein the virtualization response comprises the address or identifier assigned to the virtual ~~enclosure~~ port.

27. (Currently Amended) The ~~method~~ apparatus as recited in claim ~~34~~ 21, wherein the virtualization message indicates that the physical port is to obtain an address or identifier assigned to the virtual ~~enclosure~~ port from a DNS server.

28. (Currently Amended) The method as recited in claim 21 24, further comprising: receiving ~~the~~ an address or identifier assigned to the virtual ~~enclosure~~ port.

29. (Currently Amended) The apparatus ~~method~~ as recited in claim 24, wherein the address or identifier is an FCID.

30. (Currently Amended) The ~~method~~ apparatus as recited in claim 21, wherein the virtualization message indicates that the physical port is to handle messages addressed to an address or identifier assigned to the virtual ~~enclosure~~ port.

31. (Currently Amended) The ~~method~~ apparatus as recited in claim 30, wherein the address or identifier is an FCID.

32. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable medium storing thereon computer-readable instructions for implementing storage virtualization in a first network device of a storage area network, comprising:

instructions for sending a virtualization message to a physical port of a second network device within the storage area network, the virtualization message instructing the physical port to handle messages addressed to a virtual ~~enclosure~~ port of a virtual enclosure, the virtual enclosure having one or more virtual ~~enclosure~~ ports and being adapted for representing one or more virtual storage units, each of the virtual storage units representing one or more physical storage locations on one or more physical storage units of the storage area network; and

instructions for receiving a virtualization response from the physical port of the second network device in response to the virtualization message.

33. (Currently Amended) An apparatus adapted for implementing storage virtualization in a first network device of a storage area network, comprising:

means for sending a virtualization message to a physical port of a second network device within the storage area network, the virtualization message instructing the physical port to handle messages addressed to a virtual ~~enclosure~~ port of a virtual enclosure, the virtual enclosure having one or more virtual ~~enclosure~~ ports and being adapted for representing one or more virtual storage units, each of the virtual storage units representing one or more physical storage locations on one or more physical storage units of the storage area network; and

means for receiving a virtualization response from the physical port of the second network device in response to the virtualization message.

34. (Currently Amended) An apparatus adapted for implementing storage virtualization in a first network device of a storage area network, comprising:

a processor; and

a memory, at least one of the processor and the memory being adapted for:

sending a virtualization message to a physical port of a second network device within the storage area network, the virtualization message instructing the physical port to handle messages addressed to a virtual enclosure port of a virtual enclosure, the virtual enclosure having one or more virtual enclosure ports and being adapted for representing one or more virtual storage units, each of the virtual storage units representing one or more physical storage locations on one or more physical storage units of the storage area network; and receiving a virtualization response from the physical port of the second network device in response to the virtualization message.

35. (Currently Amended) A method of implementing storage virtualization in a first network device of a storage area network, the method comprising:

receiving a virtualization message at a physical port of the first network device from a second network device within the storage area network, the virtualization message instructing the physical port to handle messages addressed to a virtual enclosure port of a virtual enclosure, the virtual enclosure having one or more virtual enclosure ports and being adapted for representing one or more virtual storage units, each of the virtual storage units representing one or more physical storage locations on one or more physical storage units of the storage area network; and

sending a virtualization response from the physical port of the first network device to the second network device in response to the virtualization message.

36. (Currently Amended) The ~~method~~ network device as recited in claim 52 35, wherein the virtualization message indicates that the physical port is to obtain an address or identifier assigned to the virtual enclosure port, ~~the method further comprising:~~
— ~~obtaining the address or identifier assigned to the virtual enclosure port.~~

37. (Currently Amended) The method as recited in claim 35 36, further comprising:
obtaining and storing the address or identifier assigned to the virtual port.

38. (Currently Amended) The ~~method~~ network device as recited in claim 52 35, wherein the virtualization message indicates that the physical port is to obtain an address or identifier assigned to the virtual enclosure port from a DNS server, ~~the method further comprising:~~
— ~~obtaining the address or identifier assigned to the virtual enclosure port.~~

39. (Currently Amended) The method as recited in claim 37 36, further comprising:
sending the address or identifier assigned to the virtual enclosure port.

40. (Currently Amended) The method as recited in claim 37 36, wherein the address or identifier is an FCID.

41. (Currently Amended) The ~~method~~ network device as recited in claim 52 35, wherein the virtualization message indicates that the physical port is to handle messages addressed to an address or identifier assigned to the virtual enclosure port.

42. (Currently Amended) The ~~method~~ network device as recited in claim 41, wherein the

address or identifier is an FCID.

43. (Currently Amended) The method as recited in claim 35 41, further comprising:

handling messages addressed to the address or identifier assigned to the virtual
~~enclosure~~ port.

44. (Currently Amended) The method as recited in claim 35, further comprising:

handling messages addressed to the virtual ~~enclosure~~ port of the virtual enclosure.

45. (Currently Amended) The method as recited in claim 37 36, further comprising:

handling messages addressed to the address or identifier assigned to the virtual
~~enclosure~~ port.

46. (Currently Amended) The method as recited in claim 35, further comprising:

receiving a report message requesting an identification of one or more of the virtual
storage units supported by an address or identifier assigned to one of the virtual ~~enclosure~~
ports;

sending a reply message identifying one or more of the virtual storage units.

47. (Original) The method as recited in claim 46, wherein the address or identifier is
an FCID.

48. (Currently Amended) The ~~method~~ network device as recited in claim 52 46, wherein
one or more of the virtual storage units comprises a VLUN or other virtual representation of
storage on the storage area network.

49. (Original) The method as recited in claim 46, wherein the one or more of the virtual storage units identified in the reply message are those virtual storage units that are visible to an initiator sending the report message.

50. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable medium storing thereon computer readable instructions for implementing storage virtualization in a first network device of a storage area network, comprising:

instructions for receiving a virtualization message at a physical port of the first network device from a second network device within the storage area network, the virtualization message instructing the physical port to handle messages addressed to a virtual enclosure port of a virtual enclosure, the virtual enclosure having one or more virtual enclosure ports and being adapted for representing one or more virtual storage units, each of the virtual storage units representing one or more physical storage locations on one or more physical storage units of the storage area network; and

instructions sending a virtualization response from the physical port of the first network device to the second network device in response to the virtualization message.

51. (Currently Amended) A network device adapted for implementing storage virtualization in a first network device of a storage area network, comprising:

means for receiving a virtualization message at a physical port of the first network device from a second network device within the storage area network, the virtualization message instructing the physical port to handle messages addressed to a virtual enclosure port of a virtual enclosure, the virtual enclosure having one or more virtual enclosure ports and being adapted for representing one or more virtual storage units, each of the virtual storage

units representing one or more physical storage locations on one or more physical storage units of the storage area network; and

means for sending a virtualization response from the physical port of the first network device to the second network device in response to the virtualization message.

52. (Currently Amended) A network device adapted for implementing storage virtualization in a first network device of a storage area network, comprising:

a processor; and

a memory, at least one of the processor and the memory being adapted for:

receiving a virtualization message at a physical port of the first network device from a second network device within the storage area network, the virtualization message instructing the physical port to handle messages addressed to a virtual ~~enelosure~~ port of a virtual enclosure, the virtual enclosure having one or more virtual ~~enelosure~~ ports and being adapted for representing one or more virtual storage units, each of the virtual storage units representing one or more physical storage locations on one or more physical storage units of the storage area network; and

sending a virtualization response from the physical port of the first network device to the second network device in response to the virtualization message.